

Nathaniel's Hope Shows God's Love to Children with Special Needs

After Nathaniel Timothy Kuck was born in 1997 with multiple birth defects, hospital visits and surgeries became part of his normal life. Despite beating the odds time and again, the "miracle boy" died at age 4.

Inspired by his story—realizing what may appear imperfect in the eyes of people is perfect in God's sight—Tim and Marie Kuck founded Nathaniel's Hope, an organization that helps children with special needs and their families to understand the hope of Christ.

"We've got these five F's," Tim says. "We've got faith, family, friends, finances and flexibility, and we're barely making it. How in the world do people do it (who) have a special-needs child, (but) don't have five F's? How do they do it?"

Nathaniel's Hope started from an earnest desire to give those families rest, support and the love of Christ.

"To be honest, most families that have kids with special needs are kind of thrown into a community that you don't want to be a part of, and it's kind of exhausting," Marie says. "We're trying to pull for these families, cheer them on their journey, encourage them and give them hope but also provide practical assistance along the way."

The organization takes both small and large steps to embrace the community. Small measures include referring to children with special needs as "VIP Kids" in an effort to avoid stigmatizing them or defining them wrongly by their disability. Larger measures include the Birthday Club, which

sends gifts and cards to VIP Kids on their birthday, and Make 'm Smile, which Marie describes as “the largest party in the U.S. celebrating kids with special needs.” The event is held every June in Orlando, Florida, and last year drew over 40,000 people.

Tim and Marie want to keep doing even more for VIP Kids and their families. Their next goal is to teach churches how to support the special-needs community. They hope to partner with about 1,000 churches nationwide by 2020. To donate or learn more about Nathaniel's Hope, visit [. –Taylor Berglund](#)